CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

The ultimate aim of a contemporary primary education system is to assist individuals such as teachers and administrators to operate effectively in a world filled with change, complexity and diversity. Goals are set. Plans are made. Curriculums set the foundation of teaching programs and they are the necessary tools through which knowledge, ideas, values and skills are transformed into reality.

The following review of published literature is gleaned from linguists, psychologists, psycholinguists and other professionals whose expertise creates a deeper foundation towards the understanding of young learner's second language acquisition. This chapter details a comprehensive collection of theories, experiments and methodologies that relate to second language acquisition from a young learner's perspective as well as stakeholders. The research presented throughout the chapter is grounded in support of the research question. The chapter outlines the indispensable components for the support of this research.

2.1 Theoretical framework

2.1.1 Literacy: The aim of the research

According to the 1998 joint position statement of the International Reading Association (IRA) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), pre-kindergarten children need developmentally appropriate experiences and teaching to support literacy learning. These include, but are not limited to:

- Positive, nurturing relationships with adults who engage in responsive conversations with individual children, model reading and writing behavior, and foster children's interest in the enjoyment of reading and writing
- Print-rich environments that provide opportunities and tools for children to see and use written language for a variety of purposes, with teachers drawing children's attention to specific letters and word. Adult's daily reading of high-quality books to individual children or small groups, including books that positively reflect children's identity, home language, and culture
- Opportunities for children to talk about what is read and to focus on the sounds and parts of language as well as the meaning
- Teaching strategies and experiences that form phonemic awareness, such as songs, finger plays, games, poems, and stories in which phonemic patterns such as rhyme and alliteration are salient

- Opportunities to engage in play that incorporates literacy tools, such as writing grocery lists in dramatic play, making signs in block building, and using icons and words in exploring computer games
- First hand experiences that expand children's vocabulary, such as trips in the community and exposure to various tools, objects, and materials

Language and literacy are composed of listening, speaking, writing, thinking, and reading. The foundations of language and literacy are critical to all other curriculum areas as well as to the individual's social and emotional development. Children develop the basis for communication in infancy, beginning with nonverbal and social exchanges, by developing spoken language, moving to an understanding of how oral language is translated into written symbols, and then finally learning to decode and create written symbols to develop literacy. A solid foundation in language development in the years before a child enters school will promote success in reading and writing in the future. Young children who have rich language and literacy experiences are less likely to have difficulties learning to read.

The ways children learn to read and write are similar to how they develop language. Just as children seem compelled to learn language, children become excited about pictures and letters to communicate. The printed word, whether it is in a storybook or in the environment, is the bridge that allows children to connect their own lives to distant places, quality children's literature, and to new ideas. Through natural exposure to books, children discover that written words are another way to share ideas. A child who enters school having recognized the joy of a storybook, a developing awareness of letters of the alphabet, and/or the ability to write a few letters, is a child well prepared to learn to read and write.

2.1.2 Young learners and language acquisition

The review of literature concerning young learners is divided into two age groups. The first is the 'very' young learner (Slatterly and Willis, 2001) who is under the age of seven. The 'young' learner is between 7-12 years. Scott and Ytreberg (2001) define very young as between 5-7 and the young learners between 8-11 years. Both agree that the ability to recognize the abstract from the concrete is the crucial issue. There is one underlying question to observe and debate. "When is it too late for a child to acquire a foreign/ second language?" In Lenneburg's research, this critical period ends around puberty. This does not mean that the ability to acquire second language diminishes completely, but studies show (Krashen, 1981) those children who deal best with language acquisition and proficiency in the long term are those who start as children rather than adults. With the evolution of brain mapping techniques which allow for three dimensional scans of brain material (Gordon, 2007), results show that children are naturally better equipped for language acquisition. The research reveals that the part of the brain responsible for language learning encounters rapid growth from about age six until the onset of puberty.

Other research concerning young learners argues (Salinger and Walsh) that young learners are naturally better at certain lower order skills like pronunciation, while young adults who have reached puberty are better equipped for higher level skills such as grammar. Studies from Brewster (2004) showed that young learners are better at storytelling and comprehension skills than their older counterparts as well as pronunciation. Shinn (2006) sees the importance of learning a second language early, because the learners can consciously enjoy the developmental aspects of this critical period.

Scott and Ytreberg (1991) differentiate what young learners can achieve when they are five and what they might accomplish when they are ten, are worlds apart. Children between five and seven can talk about what they are doing and can repeat what they have heard. They can initiate planning activities and can quarrel when they disagree. They use logical reasoning, have colorful imaginations and are able to intone a variety of speech patterns. They relate to direct human interaction. However, it is difficult for them to express aspects of language or meta-language that adults are able to grasp. (Cameron, 2001, p. 5). Chomsky (1969) demonstrated that children between the age of five and ten are still discovering basic structures of their L1 and much less in the L2. Older learners are afforded the awareness of language foundations and structures before exposure to an L2.

Although researchers have different ideas about young learner language acquisition, most agree the capacity to acquire the ability to incorporate pronunciation of words or chunks depends on many factors. Initially, the young learner needs to hear what they are requested to pronounce. This is the aspect of speech repetition (Miller, 1977).

A range of studies have shown that the size of a child's vocabulary by the age of 24 months correlates with the child's future development and language skills (Richards, J. C., 1974). A lack of language strength by this age has detrimental and long-term effects on the child's cognitive development, which is why it is so important for parents to engage their infants in language.

2.1.3 Why teach L2 to young learners

The primary reason for teaching L2 to young learners is that children of this age are at the peak of their language acquisition. The widely held principle that "younger is better" and that children learn more rapidly and efficiently, is appreciated by scores of researchers, *(Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies* Vol.6, No.2, October 2010).

English has become the language of international policy currently in use in the European framework. It is also recognized as the official lingua franca of the ASEAN Nations of Asia. For this reason, parents want their children learning English at younger ages so that they may benefit from a strong language background as part of their future academic and business careers. EU member countries encourage all of their citizens to carry a European Language Portfolio (ELP). Employees of all age sectors keep a personal record of their interaction with various languages as well as

their encounters with people from other cultures and backgrounds. Some of the benefits of this record keeping portfolio is said to cultivate a person's tolerance towards various cultures and to allow for freedom of travel between member nations across the European continent. It fosters the opportunity to evaluate their individual learning practices and it motivates participants to pursue lifelong learning (Brewster, 2004).

Because this research revolves around an Asian context of L2 learning and acquisition, the author finds empirical data that supports the conclusive effects of early childhood English education. Katsuyama, Nishigaki and Wang (2008) discovered through their research on 1466 elementary level schoolchildren in Japan, that children who received English instruction in their early years went on to have a greater interest and aptitude towards learning English over children who did not. Thus, positive encounters with English language learning and instruction can fuel a child's desire to learn. This appetite for English must be developed as well as sustained according to positive pedagogic principles and methods. If the child's first encounter with an L2 is negative or unpleasant, the resulting feelings towards future acquisition become tainted (Donryei, 2001, Schindler, 2006).

When teaching a second language, it is essential to remember that children are unique and naturally gifted because of the simple fact of evolution. They require experiences and stimulation for acquisition to occur. A successful child ESL program must be interactive and focused on the child learner only. Adult methods are rarely applied in today's revelations on L2 learning psychology. Children must be given the opportunity to develop and must be strongly motivated. *"Active learning using constructivist and whole language approaches uses meaningful activities and children's prior knowledge, experiences, and perceptions to build real knowledge"* (Clark,1995; Cuevas, 1996).

Children are more open to learning a new language since they have no preconceived ideas. Especially in pre-school, there are many opportunities for children to interact with their peers. They meet foreign language speaking adults and encounter a vast new ocean of gestures, learning styles and teaching methods. Children are guided by their feelings and emotions. These emotions are important components of their psychological make-up and should be considered by the L2 instructor.

Pantaleoni (1988, p.70) refers to multiple benefits for introducing L2 into pre-school education. She mentions that pre-school students' capacity to imitate, simulate and reproduce sounds is quite elevated, "almost flawless", as their vocal chords are still quite flexible. Secondly, young learners may feel more at ease in their relationship with a qualified ESL instructor and within their peer group since they feel less reserved, thus increasing participation levels. Additionally, an inquiry in relation to the benefits of including ESL into a primary curriculum, (Krause, 1997) provides evidence that young learners come to the classroom because they like to talk with foreigners and their parents want them to acquire the L2 for its potential life benefits. So, a positive learning atmosphere is important when teaching ESL. Creating a psychologically secure setting in the classroom enhances learning, no matter how difficult the subject or the progression level of the student. Consequently, the

teacher's role plays an important factor when dealing with young learners. The instructor who considers the feelings of the students, as well as their motivation and attitudes to foreign language learning will be more likely to be successful in teaching. If students feel at home, they will participate in lessons more (Cakir, 2004).

Young learners are also naturally motivated and this motivation comes in various forms. Blikk (2004) refers to the use of puppets as an excellent way to teach L2. In the research classroom, a certain group of puppets can understand only the L2 and this proves useful. The child is at times permitted to take the puppet home for 'talking practice'. The additional use of color cards, flash cards and minor role plays enhances active communicative learning. Songs, storybooks, rhymes and chants add to the list of successes. Songs are great ways to learn language because rhythm and chant facilitate the absorption of new words, chunks and phrases. As the children age, the amount of play will decrease and the practice mode will increase. Specific gestures can accompany words to enhance word and movement association.

Young learners are led by imaginative experiences and retaining positive memories is extremely important. Children enrolled in the Native Speaker Program get ready for their futures in scholastics through play in a safe and nurturing environment. If a child enjoys the process, she will participate whole-heartedly. Initially, the teacher must win the student over and must encourage the child and promote feelings of success. The institution does not promote failure. The child must be able to think clearly and freely. The school encourages a sense of security both at home and at school. Most importantly, students are not permitted to laugh when other students try out the new vocabulary.

Additional activities further the experience by incorporating weekly themes from daily life in Thailand. Greetings, family, home, food, drink, holidays (Western and Thai), plants, fruit, animals, colors and numbers are all part of the Native Speaker curriculum. Combining different cultural situations within the context of the lesson allows for a sense of familiarity and natural understanding. The ESL teacher who knows their craft will be accepted relatively fast, and language develops naturally (some say miraculously) in their presence. The young learner quickly realizes that to communicate with this new being, they need to acquire "language". At first we start with gestures and a few words. By combining words with gesture we then move on to simple phrases. Rarely, if ever, is only one word the focus. The instructor will introduce objects with the accompanying, "It's a dog/ cat/ boy/girl. The chunk, 'it is' is not used because this phrase is not common in normal speech. Young children explain both through gesture and speech what is happening around them.

Michael Long (1983) and others suggest that acquisition takes place best in a setting in which meaning is negotiated through interaction, so that the student has influence on the message being communicated. Of course, the greater the language skills of the listener, the more effectively the interaction can influence the message. This suggests to the teacher that early attention must focus on providing students with the ability to communicate messages such as, "I don't understand," "Could you please repeat that?," "Did you mean . . . ?,""Could you please speak more slowly?," and so forth.

In this section, the importance of language has been discussed, that play and other activities can enhance language learning and language acquisition and that teaching L2 to children requires a different set of academic rules. Language is complex and it is learned when participants hear speech and see gestures amidst varying circumstances and emotions. A strong and supportive environment is critical to success.

2.1.4 What is active learning?

To understand more about what this means in practice, it is useful to refer back to the description of active learning that appeared in the Tickell Review of the EYFS (2011). In annex 8 of this document, there is a review of the research evidence highlighting the value of paying close attention to how children demonstrate the characteristics of effective learning. This is reinforced by the requirement in the revised EYFS Framework to provide written comments on each child's approaches to learning in both the progress check at age two and the EYFS profile.

When children are actively learning, they are:

- being involved and concentrating
- keep trying
- Enjoyment of achieving what they set out to do.

The Tickell review provides some useful information on what the three aspects of active learning are all about, helping us to see what to look for when observing this characteristic of young children's learning? Active learning describes the intrinsic motivation a child feels as they attempt to achieve 'mastery' – perhaps by learning a new skill, completing a task or doing something for themselves for the first time. By building up their experience of competence, understanding and autonomy, a child will be developing the vital skills and dispositions of a successful lifelong learner.

The three aspects of active learning are as follows:

- Being involved and concentrating- describes the intensity of attention that arises from children concentrating on following a line of interest in their activities.
- Keeping on trying- refers to the importance of persistence even in the face of challenge or difficulties: an element of purposeful control which supports resilience.
- Enjoying achieving what they set out to do- refers to the reward of meeting one's own goals, building on the intrinsic motivation that supports long-term success, rather than relying on the approval of others.

Practitioners' familiar with the work of Ferre Laevers on the influence of well-being and involvement on young children's learning, and the Effective Early Learning (EEL) project (Pascal and Bertram et al. 1996) will recognize these key attributes of active learning. Pascal and Bertram point out:

- An involved child is fascinated and is totally absorbed in the activity; the time passes quickly for the child.
- An involved child is extremely alert and sensitive to relevant stimuli, releases an immense amount of energy and experiences a wonderful feeling of satisfaction. The source of this satisfaction is an inbuilt desire for the child to gain a better understanding of reality.
- Involvement does not occur when the activities are too easy or when the task is too demanding. It is situated at the edge of a child's capabilities, or in the Zone of Proximal Development.

While practitioners are observing children as part of the cycle of observation, formative assessment and planning for new possibilities, they could focus on the characteristics of active learning by asking themselves the following questions about an individual child (State of Victoria, 2009)

- How often have I noticed her becoming really involved in an experience that interests her?
- Are there particular things/places /experiences that fascinate her?
- Do we provide enough time and opportunity for her to concentrate and not be distracted?
- Do I give her time to do things for herself, or am I always rushing in to help?
- How well do we plan opportunities and experiences for individual children that are challenging yet achievable?
- Do I use praise effectively, encouraging a child to enjoy her success for its own sake and not for any external reward?
- Do we need to do more to help parents see the benefits of encouraging intrinsic motivation?

By building up this breadth of knowledge about a child, teachers will be improving the quality of that child's experience in the early years setting. This in itself will contribute to raising the overall quality of your provision. Observing the characteristics of learning should be part of everyday practice and should not require any detailed pre-planning. It is much more about being aware of each child as an individual and looking carefully at how they approach their learning.

The more teachers focus on noticing different children's approaches to learning, the more skilled you will become at 'seeing what is happening'. Reflecting on your observations and sharing them with colleagues will help to build up a more complete picture of the interests, attitudes and fascinations of each child in your setting.

2.2 Research in child development and learning

2.2.1 Vygotsky's social cognitive theory

Vygotsky's (1962, 1978) social learning theory suggests that students develop mature thinking ability by observing how teachers and other experts approach learning tasks and by practicing expert processes with coaching from the teacher (Collins, Brown and Newman, 1989, Wood, Bruner and Ross, 1976). Learners can optimize their Zone of Proximal Development when teachers and others more proficient provide the support needed for completing the learning task. Eventually, teachers offer less support and students begin to internalize the thought processes and strategies they have observed and practiced. Vygotsky's theory supports the critical roles of modeling how to use strategies and of scaffolding guidance as students become independent learners.

Socio-cultural Theory

- Zone of proximal development
- Asking the right questions
- Planning for experiences
- Scaffolding
- Social collaboration interaction
- Fantasy play
- Piaget and Vygotsky
- Constructivist

Researcher and theorist Lev Vygotsky specializes in the arena of child development. Vygotsky identifies with the theory that humans' use of language is an instrument for mental activity (Mitchell and Myles 2004; Johnson 2004). He presents the idea of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). This concept illustrates that a zone exists between existing knowledge and potential knowledge. He affirms that this is the specific region where learning occurs for a child. Vygotsky (1978, p. 85) as cited in Mitchell and Myles (2004), the ZPD is: "the difference between a child's developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the higher level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Mitchell and Myles 2004: 86; Van Patten and Williams 2007, p. 210). A child who engages in learning a specific thought in a L2 may profit from interacting with a more experienced peer in the target L2 who can support in the navigation through the ZPD. For the purpose of teaching L2 through TPR and CLT, it is imperative that the L2 student is guided through the ZPD by the teacher. This can also be facilitated by a more capable peer like those students with an English speaking mother or father.

Vygotsky imparts three different positions:

1. Social learning precedes development. Vygotsky believes that children first obtain knowledge from their peers. From infancy, children interact with others (parents, siblings, friends, etc.) and absorb new information from this interaction. This is the first type of learning we are capable of as humans. The second level of this theory states that after we learn socially, we are then able to develop our own knowledge without the help of others.
2. The MKO. Vygotsky developed this term which stands for the More Knowledgeable Other. The MKO has more knowledge about a certain topic than the learner. The learner interacts with the MKO and gains new information from this person. Examples of an MKO are teachers, coaches, parents, or even peers, books, and computers.
3. The "ZPD." This acronym refers to the Zone of Proximal Development. The zone is the difference between the student's ability to perform a task with guidance and the student's ability to perform it independently. Vygotsky believes we should teach within this zone; our lessons should not be too easy or too difficult. For example, a young child learning to read will need guidance when trying to read and will not be able to read on their own. Therefore, to give this child an assignment of reading a story and answering questions on it would not be practical. Instead, this child would not a teacher/adult to sit with him/her while reading and would perform best answering questions in a discussion format.

Critical Period Hypothesis

The term referred to as 'the critical period' entered the domain of L1 acquisition from the field of biology (Genesee, 1988, p. 97). The hypothesis puts emphasis on neural plasticity, or a child's brain having a certain amount of flexibility that transfers brain function from one area to another within the cerebral sphere (Scovel, 1998, p.128). The references in this paper shall refer to this critical period hypothesis, the brain's capacity for language development and the maturing effects on SLA in very young learners. As mentioned in this paper's hypothesis section, when young learners are exposed to the native-like quality of a second language, the brain allows for bilingual development to occur. The grammatical and lexical disparities between Thai and English are wide and speakers of these languages often find each other's languages difficult to master. Despite compulsory English classes throughout the secondary phase of education, students continually grapple with English sentence structure. There seems to be little opportunity to practice authentic English and even less opportunity to carry the English language outside of the classroom. So the question arises, "if adult students had received a high amount of English language exposure from the time they entered Anuban (Kindergarten level), would this have reduced or even removed the barriers they currently face?" Another issue is how much exposure does the kindergarten brain need in order to develop native–like competency?

The concept of a critical period in language development was proposed in 1959 by Penfield and Roberts (Hakuta et. al. 2003). Following in 1967, Lenneburg suggested that the facility to learn a native language transpires within a fixed period, specifically from birth through puberty, with a drop in learning ability from puberty (Fromkin and Rodman, 1998). Touching lightly on the biological research of the time, research into birdsong and human speech and the importance of the young being exposed to communicative sounds of adults, Doupe and Kuhl (1999, pp. 609-610) define a critical or in their terms a 'sensitive and impressionable period' as "a specific phase of the life cycle of an organism in which there is enhanced sensitivity to experience, or the absence of a particular experience". Newport (2002, p. 737) defines the critical period as "a maturational time period during which some crucial experience will have its peak effect on development and learning".

There is, however, research that is utilized in this paper of authors who are divided as to whether there exists a real critical period with arguments in favor of the hypothesis,(Oyama, 1976, 1978; Johnson and Newport, 1989; DeKeyser, 2000) and arguments less supportive, mainly (Bailystok, 2002; Hakuta, Bailystok and Wiley, 2003). Even though these authors are critical, they infer that the analysis of data is often based on how research is interpreted. Hakuta et. al. (2003, p. 31) states, "an alternative to the critical period hypothesis is that second language learning becomes compromised with age".

The fact that infants and children alike from around the globe are able to differentiate between foreign and native speech sounds, accomplish their native tongue rapidly (Woods, 1998) and to... "go through the same stages of phonological, morphological and syntactic rule acquisition" (Fromkin and Rodman, 1998) forms the basis for Chomsky's theory of Universal Grammar. A fundamental aspect of brain development is that the brain wiring transpires within certain time periods for various functions and that these periods are critical in that once the wiring is finalized; there is no "going back." The adeptness, on which the wiring depends, is heavily influenced by experience suggested in the 'nurture debate'. The brain's language system can only successfully and permanently wire up when it is exposed to a logical combination of sound, meaning and grammar from any particular language or combinations of such as in the case of bilingual or multilingual children.

Professional ethics stipulates that controlled studies of the 'sensitive periods' of L1 acquisition are morally wrong and inhumane. However, there is the documented incident of "Genie" who from 20 months until the age of 13, spent her days alone and isolated, secured in a pottery chair or to her bed and was attacked by her mentally ill father whenever she made a sound (Hoff, 2001). Luckily, her practically blind mother, who was also detained by her mentally ill husband, escaped with Genie and the shocking tale unfolded. Amongst multiple inconceivable psychological and bodily disabilities facing Genie was that of having no verbal communication. She could not speak at all when discovered, however, after four years she had the vocabulary of a four or five year old and was capable of combining words into complex utterances and to express meanings (Hoff, 2001). In contrast, her syntactic skills were extremely lacking. Her language ability was telegraphic and somewhat like utterances of Broca's aphasia patients (Fromkin and Rodman, 1998).

These findings coincide with the development period of Wernicke's spectrum, which ends around two years and Broca's area, with overall development occurring between 4 and 6 years.

An additional source of data looks at the effects of age on second language learning. In Johnson and Newport' 1989 study, 46 Chinese and Korean natives newly arriving in America and who had learned English for at least five years as a second language post- arrival, were presented with a selection of grammatical tasks. The outcome showed that those who were between three and seven years of age on arrival did equally as well as the control group of English speakers. Those between 8 and 15 performed not so well, although the younger they were when they came ashore, the nearer they came to approximating native speakers. Those seventeen or older did least well and there was no difference between a seventeen and a thirty year old.

The greater part of research finds that language is at the least innately discoverable. Any person of adequate acumen, continuously exposed from birth to a language, will acquire the verbal skill inherently. Therefore, if the sensitive period of language acquisition is within the first four to six years, sufficient exposure to a L2 during this period becomes more beneficial purely due to the brain's own growth phase and its extraordinary plasticity. It seems prudent to observe age-related differences in language learning, because practically every learner undergoes extensive cognitive, physical and emotional transformation during puberty.

An essential feature of learning applied in this research study is the Zone of Proximal Development. In other words, learning awakens a variety of internal developmental processes, which can take place only when the child is interacting with people in his environment. Once these processes are internalized, they become part of the child's independent development achievement. Therefore, learning is a necessary and universal aspect of the process of developing culturally organized, specifically human, psychological functions (Vygotsky, 1978).

2.2.2 Gardner's multiple intelligences theory

Howard Gardner's (1943-) work desires not just to describe the world, but to help to create the conditions to change it. The scale of Howard Gardner's contribution can be gauged from following comments in his introduction to the tenth anniversary edition of his classic work *Frames of Mind. The theory of multiple intelligences*: In the glory days of the psychometric and behaviorist eras, it was generally believed that intelligence was a single entity that was inherited; and that human beings – initially a blank slate – could be trained to learn anything, provided that it was presented in an appropriate way. Nowadays an increasing number of researchers believe precisely the opposite; that there exists a multitude of intelligences, quite independent of each other; that each intelligence has its own strengths and constraints; that the mind is far from unencumbered at birth; and that it is unexpectedly difficult to teach things that go against early 'naive' theories of that challenge the natural lines of force within an intelligence and its matching domains. (Gardner, 1993, p. xxiii)

With these researcher's theories in mind, the focus of the study is to develop an Active Learning Strategy curriculum that would translate into learner centered lesson plans and a syllabus that builds upon previous knowledge for the final product. Teaching strategies for the new curriculum will require both native speakers and Thai English teacher's participation. The new curriculum will review micro and macro skill sets. Assessments and portfolio work will be collected to establish a grading system based on the Likert scale and then a rubric is utilized to place students into various achievement categories. Although these students are taught all four skill sets, the research focuses on speaking and listening to the English Language in an effort to attain a deductive view of language which includes Native like accents and pronunciation. An attempt to move multiple word groups from short-term memory into working memory is a goal .Grammar is not the issue here, but the formation of chunks and phrasal agreement early on is a major factor in the research.

In this research study, the application of Multiple Intelligence focuses on the claim that there are several ways to understand the world around us. Not a single ability, but many distinctive aptitudes exist inside the brain. Gardner suggests that there are at least seven or eight intelligences. We all have them. This makes us human. However, no two people, not even twins, have the same combinations of these intelligences. This is important for teachers to know because they can count on every one of their students to have all eight intelligences, albeit in diverse configurations. Because there are multiple intelligences, there are many ways to understand the world. Ideas should be taught in more than one way. This will enable teachers to reach more students and teach students what it is like to think in more than one way. In other words, students should be taught flexibility and provided with multiple views for understanding the physical world, the social world, the human world, and the artistic world. If we teach only one way, we will reach only one kind of student (Coreil, 2003).

CHOICE BOARD FOR MULTIPLE INTELLIGENCES

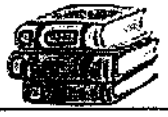
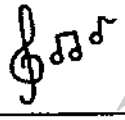
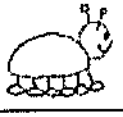
Verbal/Linguistic • Write instructions • Keep a personal journal • Create a poem • Create TV ads • Read stories to others • Retell in your own words • Teach concept mapping • Create crossword puzzle 	**Logical/Mathematical** • Create a time line • Compare/contrast ideas • Create an outline for a story • Design a map • Decipher codes • Create patterns • Design a game to show... 	**Visual/Spatial** • Create a poster • Draw a map • Create visual diagrams • Draw from different perspectives • Create a comic strip • Graph results of a survey 
Interpersonal • Tell stories • Teach a cooperative game • Role play a situation • Discuss and come to a conclusion • Survey or interview others 	Free Choice	**Body Kinesthetic** • Make up a cooperative game • Practice physical exercise • Conduct hands-on experiments • Construct a model or representation 
Musical Rhythmic • Create raps • Play musical instruments • Write to music • Teach dance steps • Make up sounds and sound effects • Write a jingle • Create rhymes that... 	**Naturalist** • Collect and categorize data, materials, or ideas • Discover or experiment • Take a field trip • Study means of survival • Adapt materials to a new use • Label and classify 	**Intropersonal** • Keep a personal journal • Write about personal experiences • Think about and plan... • Review or visualize • How would it feel to... • Imagine and write about the future 

Figure 2 Age appropriate model of Gardner's Multiple Intelligences theory
Source: Dare to Differentiate, daretodifferentiate.wikispaces.com

The independent variable for this research asks:

> Is the new ALS curriculum effective? Additionally, how we will measure and document the program's progress? Active learning strategies work with the natural learning styles of children rather than working against them. Some considerations to engage young learners in Active Learning Strategies:
>
> - Actively engage children by naturally involving their own learning styles.
> - Help students learn by doing, a learning style that comes naturally to many children.
> - Allow teachers to differentiate instruction and curriculum. Make learning so fun students don't realize they're being taught. Lead children to learn to share space, develop social skills, brainstorm ideas, solve problems, resolve conflicts, and use higher thinking skills.

The dependent variables include the student's ability to grasp communicative processes like ALS and multiple intelligences training and theory. Those who administer the new curriculum must also be monitored and problematic issues should be resolved quickly. Controlling these issues will avoid 'rushed child syndrome' and will relieve pressure on teachers to assess children on narrow terms.

The new curriculum is designed with regard to creating real and authentic objectives and differing pedagogical approaches. Some areas remain a challenge. Some of these challenges can be are discussed in research from (Carr and Penn, 2000). The first concern is that resources are available for early childhood education. The successful delivery of any curriculum depends on its structural features. These include funding, regulations, accountability and adequate training. If the staff is poorly trained, the curriculum will not be delivered properly, especially when this curriculum style requires both physical and mental stamina. My research shows that the preschool sector for education in Thailand is poorly funded which prevents the training of staff and the recruitment of motivated and highly trained professionals. The training issue is an ongoing difficulty for teachers teaching in Thailand.

The second challenge is assessment. Because of the emphasis on holistic goals rather than strict knowledge based on content, it is difficult to assess very young learners. New frameworks for evaluation appropriate to defined objectives must be worked out. In the future, matters concerning the amount of time used to assess children must be explored. Carr and May (2000) report that:

> *"Given a curriculum model that sees learning as the development of more complex and useful understanding, knowledge and skill attached to purposeful and cultural contexts, rather than a staircase of individually acquired skills , the assessment and evaluation of children and programs becomes a complex matter."*

On the other hand, this study takes interest in the demonstrated communicative abilities of children and so any generalizations drawn based upon the data may prioritize interaction and participation over knowledge of structural rules or even language prowess. It is also important to remember that the academy is a private institution that may not be indicative of the average Thai curriculum or student.

2.2.3 Piaget's stages of development

According to psychologist Jean Piaget, children progress through a series of four key stages of cognitive development marked by shifts in how they understand the world. Piaget believed that children are like "little scientists" and that they actively try to explore and make sense of the world around them. Through his observations of his own children, Piaget developed a stage theory of intellectual development that included four distinct stages: the sensorimotor stage, from birth to age 2; the preoperational stage, from age 2 to about age 7; the concrete operational stage, from age 7 to 11; and the formal operational stage, which begins in adolescence and spans into adulthood. This research involves the pre-operational stage (age 2-7).

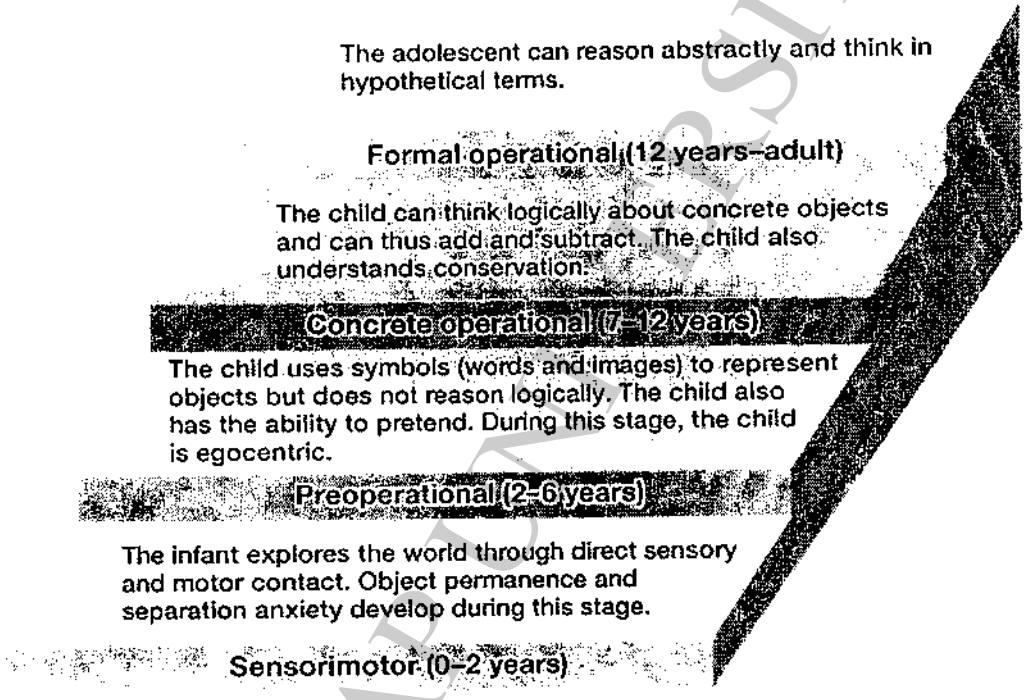


Figure 3 Piaget's four stages of learning
Source: My Stance on Educational Technology, Jean Piaget, wikispaces.com./ My+Stance+on+Educational+technology, Tangient LLC 2014.

Lessons taught to the students incorporated material from Oxford Reading Tree, Cambridge, The Letterland Series workbook and Let's Go material also from Oxford Press. The literature used to combine these elements were part of research done by the curriculum committee which included this researcher and The Creative Curriculum for Preschool, Fifth Edition published by Quality Books Inc.

There Are Three Basic Components To Piaget's Cognitive Theory:

1. Schemas (the building blocks of knowledge
2. Adaptation processes that enable the transition from one stage to another (equilibrium, assimilation and accommodation)
3. Stages of Development:
    - sensorimotor
    - preoperational
    - concrete operational
    - formal operational

Stages of development:

- A child's cognitive development is about a child developing or constructing a mental model of the world.
- Jean Piaget was interested both in how children learnt and in how they thought.
- Piaget studied children from infancy to adolescence, and carried out many of his own investigations using his three children. He used the following research methods:
- Piaget made careful, detailed observations of children. These were mainly his own children and the children of friends. From these he wrote diary descriptions charting their development.
- Piaget believed that children think differently than adults and stated they go through 4 universal stages of cognitive development. Development is therefore biologically based and changes as the child matures. Cognition therefore develops in all children in the same sequence of stages.
- Each child goes through the stages in the same order, and no stage can be missed out - although some individuals may never attain the later stages. There are individual differences in the rate at which children progress through stages.
- Piaget (1952) believed that these stages are universal - i.e. that the same sequence of development occurs in children all over the world, whatever their culture.

Table 1 Piaget's stages of development

Period (age in years)	Outstanding characteristics	Language equivalent
Sensorimotor (0-2)	1. Egocentrism 2. Organizes by sensory and motor abilities	1. Language absent until end of period
Preoperational (2-7)	1. Increasing symbolic ability 2. Beginnings of representation	1. Egocentric speech 2. Socialized speech
Concrete operations (7-11)	1. Reversibility 2. Conservation 3. Seriation 4. Classification	1. Beginnings of verbal understanding 2. Understanding related to concrete objects
Formal operations (over 11)	1. Develops logico-mathematical structures 2. Hypothetico-deductive reasoning	1. Language freed from the concrete 2. Verbal ability to express the possible

Piaget on Language and Thought

Educational Implications

- Piaget (1952) did not explicitly relate his theory to education, although later researchers have explained how features of Piaget's theory can be applied to teaching and learning.
- Piaget has been extremely influential in developing educational policy and teaching. For example, a review of primary education by the UK government in 1966 was based strongly on Piaget's theory.
- Discovery learning – the idea that children learn best through doing and actively exploring - was seen as central to the transformation of primary school curriculum.
- 'The report's recurring themes are individual learning, flexibility in the curriculum, the centrality of play in children's learning, the use of the environment, learning by discovery and the importance of the evaluation of children's progress - teachers should 'not assume that only what is measurable is valuable.'
- Because Piaget's theory is based upon biological maturation and stages the notion of 'readiness' important. Readiness concerns when certain information or concepts should be taught. According to Piaget's theory children should not be taught certain concepts until they have reached the appropriate stage cognitive development.
- According to Piaget (1958), assimilation and accommodation require an active learner, not a passive one, because problem-solving skills cannot be taught, they must be discovered.
- Within the classroom learning should be student centered and accomplished through active discovery learning. The role of the teacher is to facilitate learning, rather than direct tuition. Therefore teachers should encourage the following within the classroom:

Conclusion

- Focus on the process of learning, rather than the end product of it.
- Using active methods that require rediscovering or reconstructing "truths".
- Using collaborative, as well as individual activities (so children can learn from each other).
- Devising situations that present useful problems, and create disequilibrium in the child.
- Evaluate the level of the child's development, so suitable tasks can be set.

2.2.4 Jerome Bruner constructivist theory

Jerome Bruner sees learning as an active process where learners' construct new ideas and concepts based on their past and current knowledge. Learner chooses and transforms information, constructs a hypothesis and makes decisions based on the cognitive structure. Cognitive structure such as schema and mental models provide meaningful experiences and allows the learner to go beyond the information presented.

Teaches should encourage students to discover learning strategies on their own. The task of the instructor is to engage young learners in active dialogue. The curriculum should be designed is such a way as to spiral of scaffold so the student is constantly building a knowledge based on previous learning experience.

Bruner (1966) conveys that active learning should include four major aspects:

1. Predisposition for learning
2. Ways a body of knowledge is structured to be easily understood by young learners.
3. The most effective sequences to present material
4. The nature of pacing of 'carrot and stick'

More recent research from Bruner has expanded the theoretical framework to include social and cultural aspects of the learning process.

Much of the theory is linked to child development research from Piaget. The ideas outlined in Bruner (1960) originated from a conference based on math and science learning. Bruner (1983) focuses on language learning and young learners aspects.

This example is taken from Bruner (1973):

"The concept of prime numbers appears to be more readily grasped when the child, through construction, discovers that certain handfuls of beans cannot be laid out in completed rows and columns. Such quantities have either to be laid out in a single file or in an incomplete row-column design in which there is always one extra or one too few to fill the pattern. These patterns, the child learns, happen to be called prime.

It is easy for the child to go from this step to the recognition that a multiple table, so called, is a record sheet of quantities in completed multiple rows and columns. Here is factoring, multiplication and primes in a construction that can be visualized."

Bruner perceives people as being active in the process of learning, continually structuring and restructuring their environment. Because Bruner views learning as an active, involved process, he has been a prime proponent of the discovery learning approach. In this approach, students are presented with a problem and some evidence: they must seek to reconcile that information and "discover" the solution to the problem.

2.3 Assessing young learners

The researchers Gutierrez and Slavin (1992, p. 337) list the fundamentals of model assessment, adapted by (Pavan, 1972).

- Evaluation is done for diagnostic purposes and results in the formulation of new educational objectives.
- Evaluation must be continuous and comprehensive.
- A child strives mainly to improve his or her performance and develop potential rather than to compete with others.
- Teachers accept that children's growth patterns are irregular and occur in different areas at different times.
- Individual pupil progress forms are used to record completed learning tasks, deficiencies that need to be addressed, and other data to suggest future learning experiences.
- Evaluation and reporting will consider all areas of a child's development: aesthetic, physical, intellectual, emotional, and social.

Deficiencies of the traditional tests led to an assessment reform in early 1990's. The focus of assessment moved from product-based assessments that evaluate what children know to performance-based assessments that appraise what they can do.

2.3.1 Assessing young learner ability

A variety of assessment techniques will be utilized in the research. The assessments will allow the students to develop Active learning skills that support learners' development. The goal of proper assessment helps to develop:

- ***successful learners*** through using their imagination and creativity, tackling new experiences and learning from them, and developing important skills including literacy and numeracy through exploring and investigating while following their own interests.

- *confident individuals* through succeeding in their activities, having the satisfaction of a task accomplished, learning about bouncing back from setbacks, and dealing safely with risk.
- *responsible citizens* through encountering different ways of seeing the world, learning to share and give and take, learning to respect themselves and others, and taking part in making decisions.
- *effective contributors* through interacting together in leading or supporting roles, tackling problems, extending communication skills, taking part in sustained talking and thinking, and respecting the opinions of others.

2.3.2 Procedures for Formative assessment

Formative assessment includes a variety of procedures such as observation, feedback, and journaling. However, there are some general principles that constitute effective formative assessment. Key requirements for successful formative assessment include the use of quality assessment tools and the subsequent use of the information derived from these assessments to improve instruction. The defining characteristic of formative assessment is its interactive or cyclical nature (Sadler, 1988). At the classroom level, for example, teachers collect information about a student's learning, make corresponding adjustments in their instruction, and continue to collect information. Formative assessment can result in significant learning gains but only when the assessment results are used to inform the instructional and learning process (Black and William, 1998). This condition requires the collection, analysis of, and response to information about student progress.

One assessment tool that reflects learner success is the student portfolio. A growth portfolio can be used to create a record of student growth in a number of areas. For example, a teacher may use writing portfolios to collect evidence of a student's progress in developing writing skills. When used as part of an evaluation of student learning, portfolios provide evidence to support attainment of stated learning objectives.

Formative assessments are more informal in nature but must also serve as valid indicators of student performance if they are to be useful in informing the teaching process. Curriculum-based measurement represents a standardized process of formative assessment that relies on the use of valid measures of student progress in a given academic area. Additionally, a strong evidence base supports the use of interactive feedback (Black and William, 1998) to increase student achievement.

The recorded results from the end of preschool or kindergarten for the recent study reported should be interpreted with some caution based on the long-term effects of programs from the 1960s and 70s, which found that the short-term effects of more academic programs wore off after a few years in elementary school and that the longitudinal effects on educational and social modification outcomes. Hopefully, additional longitudinal studies will be conducted to determine the long-term impacts of the current program, most of which combine elements of academic instruction with more child-initiated activities.

Aspects of both cognitive developmental and academic approaches have benefits that can inform the creation of comprehensive preschool programs. Academic approaches generally have clearly defined, specific objectives. It is easier for teachers to observe the progress of children if they have a lucid idea of what they are working toward. They then provide carefully planned practices designed to shift children toward success on academic outcomes, and this gives the children a noteworthy advantage as they enter elementary school. An ongoing cognitive-developmental approach highlights the significance of giving children choices and fostering their autonomy and self-regulation, scaffolding children's development by providing the foundational knowledge in an interactive, task-based active learning environment.

Ask these questions before you comment on formative evaluation and assessment:

- Are systems in place to assure teachers have ample time to review data and reflect on implications for instruction? Are supports in place for collaborative reflection?
- What assessments are most appropriate given the purpose?
- Is the assessment appropriate for the population it will be administered to?

Also ask whether the assessment provides an extensive enough range of development to reach children developing at expectation, above expectation, and below expectation. Next, examine the procedures used to collect data to assure that they are age-appropriate and sensitive to children's developmental stages.

The sensitivity to children's particular background, such as ethnic, racial, language, and functional status is also a critical consideration in determining an appropriate assessment for young children. If the population has a high percentage of children whose first language is not English then the tools and treatment must be sensitive to this distinction.

Issues for Policymakers to Consider:

- Are the assessments aligned with appropriate standards?
- Do the assessments align with the classroom curriculum?
- Do assessments provide user-friendly data so that teachers can use information to inform ongoing curriculum design?

Standards alignment

Assessments used to inform and monitor instruction are generally criterion-referenced, which means they compare a child's performance with a specified set of performance standards or expectations. Therefore, the first step in considering formative assessment systems or tools is deciding what is most important to learn. Formative assessment tools must be aligned to age-appropriate standards (e.g., Early Learning Guidelines, Common Core State Standards). This means that assessments should be similar in both breadth and depth to the domains and benchmarks in the learning standards.

Any formative assessment should be built on a foundation of age-appropriate standards, child development research, and developmentally appropriate content and methods. In early childhood, this foundation often provides a learning trajectory, developmental continuum, or milestone checklist that spans specific age levels to provide the teacher both the end goal (e.g., standard, expectation, or developmental milestone) and a roadmap of the path to this goal. This continuum of learning can also be presented as learning progressions that include a set of building blocks of sub-skills that leads to the end standard or goal.

Formative assessment brings the child back to the focus of teaching. It provides teachers with the tools to notice the individual differences among their children. It prevents teachers from blindly going through a curriculum, often teaching to the middle. Knowing this, we must be mindful that teachers need the curricular resources and support to address these noticed differences and individual needs. Formative assessment is tailored to document what's happening for children based on what the teacher is doing in the classroom for children. Formative assessment informs the administration of the curriculum, with the teacher adjusting as needed through a mix of interactions with the students, peer interactions, learning materials, and use of time.

Key Domains

High-quality assessment systems or tools assess the domains of importance to parents and educators, as well as those that are critical to and predictive of long-term academic success. Five domains are often referenced for consideration:

1. physical well-being and motor development
2. social and emotional development
3. approaches to learning
4. language and literacy
5. cognitive skills

Reliability and Validity

Assessment systems and instruments must have acceptable reliability and validity evidence to support their use. This holds true for home-grown assessments developed at the local or state level and published assessments. It is important that these levels of reliability and validity were achieved with a population similar to the group targeted for assessment.

Snow and Van Hemel (2008) offer succinct definitions of these two key components of consideration when looking at assessment for young children. "Validity of an assessment or tool is the extent to which an instrument measures what it purports to measure; the extent to which an assessment's results support the meaningful inferences for certain intended purposes" (p. 427). This means that the assessment actually measures what it says it measures. It has been noted that validity, in particular, is the most fundamental consideration in developing and evaluating assessments. Reliability is defined as, "The consistency of measurements, gauged by any of several methods, including when the testing procedure is repeated on a population of individuals or groups (test-retest reliability), or is administered by different raters (inter-rater reliability)" (p. 427). The reliability most often associated with formative assessment of young children is inter-rater reliability. This is when two assessment administrators examine data or evidence and agree on the interpretation or "score" associated with the evidence.

There are several published tools available to collect formative assessment data on young children. Not all published instruments have sufficient reliability and validity evidence to be used with all populations of children. It is the burden of the user to identify the threshold expected, often determined by the intended use of the data, and to find an assessment match for the purpose and the population.

Policymakers would be wise to examine the quality of data collected by programs using the system, or an approach with a population similar to theirs. Additionally, leaders may institute local inter-rater reliability checks. This is when an outside data collector observes a small sample of children to compare results with the teacher's assessments. Local validity tests can be conducted by administering standardized assessments to a sample of children to determine the correlation between the formative assessment and the standardized assessment.

In conclusion, students taking part in this research were observed. Their speaking and listening abilities were evaluated over a 20 week period which comprises a single term. The grading rubric can be found in (Appendix H). Speaking and listening ability were measured during weeks 4, 6, 8, 12, 15, 17 and 19 (see Appendix I). This formative assessment reflected students overall achievement in English language ability.

2.3.3 Student portfolio

Current trends in the assessment of student learning encourage the use of alternative assessments techniques that offer alternative results in the assessment process. Portfolios provide a collective index of student learning and academic progress. Portfolio is, "... the evaluation of a collected, organized body of work produced over time by the learner which demonstrates progress toward certain objectives" (Barnhardt, Kevorkian and Delett, 1997, p.3). Students and teachers work in collaboration to select the best works that demonstrate progress and achievement of measurable goals and objectives. In this research, two graded workbooks, worksheets divided into art and integrated skills are combined with supplemental worksheets that include numbers and the alphabet. Also the best two art pieces produced by the child will be included in the portfolio. The child picks one piece while the teacher picks the other.

Portfolio assessment is the systematic and intentional collection and documentation of significant samples of children's work. The portfolio process should clearly indicate the learning goals, illustrate and document the children's development over a period of time, actively involve children, and reflect each child's individual development based on expectations of the child for the year.

Some strategies for portfolio documentation are as follows:

- Determine the developmental areas to be assessed (e.g., spoken language, art, early literacy, and symbolic play, motor skills, math concepts, creativity, and peer relationships).
- Identify the documents which best demonstrate development (e.g., drawings, paintings, other art work, photos, dictated stories, book choices, teacher's notes, audio/video tapes, graphs, and checklists).
- Regularly create a collection of samples with children's input (i.e., record what the children tell you about a variety of things).
- Develop a storage system for the samples of children's work.
- Describe the documentation with colleagues in order to gain additional perspectives on the child's development. Study groups of teachers can be formed to collect and describe samples of children's work.
- Connect the children's work to the learning outcomes.
- Identify any learning gaps in the development story. Make sure the samples show the full range of what each child can do, and collect data that tells a clear story to the audience.

For this research paper, I have tried to keep a cross section of completed works. Children have their good days and their bad ones. If negative results bring down the score of their personal portfolio, these works are omitted from the final product. The student portfolio reflects both real and authentic English communication skills which are used for real English communication

Portfolio collections include:

- Two dimensional art projects, including samples of cutting, drawing and pasting.
- Each child gets to choose their favorite work for each term and this is used as the cover page of the portfolio packet. Even when I find shortcomings in student work, but they like the work they produced, it will always be included.
- Emergent writing samples which are dependent on the child's age and their brain development during this age are prime candidates to show parents. I point out that I am looking for the process and not the result. These results are gathered from their 'Letterland' and 'Let's Go workbooks'.
- Supplemental worksheets geared to a slightly higher academic level express the child's progress over time.
- Finding out the projects and assignments that the students enjoy makes future lesson planning within the curriculum framework more fun and challenging.

2.3.4 Reflective practice

Reflective practice is a tool that assists instructors to develop self-awareness and creates an atmosphere that supports teacher's growth and change. It is imperative to bring awareness to the teacher's internal world because of the way young children learn. Young children learn implicitly and the messages they receive are imbedded in the internal worlds of their teachers and caregivers (Siegel and Shahmmon-Shanok, 2010). The problem with existing interventions directed at improving relationships is that they do not focus enough on the internal world of the teacher. Communication between young children and infants exists mostly in the non-verbal realm of experience (Siegel and Shahmoon-Shanok, 2010). Reflexes, eye contact, body movement and sounds are just a few ways teachers communicate their inner world with the children they are tasked to educate. Teachers who are not aware of this are also not aware of how they are influencing the children that are part of their relationships (Heller et al., 2004).

Early childhood education needs to employ interventions that deal with the instructor as a whole being. In order to accomplish this, early childhood research needs to look towards the field of mental health. Reflective practice and reflective supervision are skills. Clinicians use reflective methodology to address a patients powerful emotions which they encounter on a daily basis (Heffron and March, 2010). The research is lacking in early childhood education on how reflective practice can improve relationships and the quality of care and the imparting of knowledge. Most research conducted on reflective practice and education involves teachers and students in the older phase, but focus needs to turn to young learners as the brain is shaped by the relationships and experiences young children have in this critical period of development (Seigel, 2010). Additionally, how the brain develops through varied

relationships will influence how a child's regulatory system responds to situations and their emotional resiliency throughout life.

What do Teachers Gain From Reflective Practice?

In order to demonstrate the advantages of reflective practice, it is necessary to consider the skills teachers can develop through this type of practice. Reflection can assist in improving their relationships inside the classroom. This researcher found it difficult to consult teachers while they were teaching and all interviews were conducted outside of their classrooms. If higher level administration wants to invest the time and the resources needed to implement reflective methodology and practice, they need to start with early childhood development and then work their way towards the older children.

First, it is necessary to consider the purpose of reflective practice. Weatherston, Weigland and Weigand (2010) described the primary purpose of reflective practice as the "shared exploration of the emotional content of toddlers and family work as expressed in relationships, (p.23). They go on to point out that individuals who work with young children face situations that evoke powerful emotions everyday that can arouse strong feelings and trigger memories from their own childhoods. (Weatherson et al., 2010). These feelings and memories can be explicit, repressed or even unconscious and they have a powerful effect on how the individual relates to the child. Thompson and Pascal (2011) wrote that, "Reflective practice is not simply a matter of pausing for thought from time to time. Rather, it is a much more sophisticated process of integrating personal and professional knowledge with the demands of a situation as part of an intelligent and creative approach to practice," (p. 20). Reflection helps integrate personal and professional knowledge with demands of the situation by developing an individual's ability to become aware of the internal processes, to observe interactions openly and objectively, and to question the behaviors that link them to internal states. Skills acquired through refection help teachers have more sensitive interactions in the classroom.

2.4 CLT in relation to active learning

Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is the foremost theoretical style of current English instruction. Many applied linguists' deem this technique as the most valuable method to ELT. Since its inception in Europe in the early 1970's, CLT has functioned as a major basis of influence on language teaching systems around the globe. Li (1998) mentions that CLT has grown in scope and has been employed by assorted educators in distinctive means. Literature offered by schools and teachers espouse that CLT is by far the most widespread method, at least in the West. They assert that CLT is the proven methodology of choice. This is very well and good until the institution is asked explicitly to present a detailed account of Communicative Methodology. "What is CLT precisely?" or "Does CLT portend teaching conversation in the absence of grammar in a curriculum, or an emphasis on open-

ended discussion activities as the major characteristic of the course?" The reply to these questions are best understood by examining CLT in requisites of its historical development, of a set of principles about the aspiration of language teaching, the variety of classroom activities that best facilitate learning, and the tasks of teachers and learners in the ESL classroom.

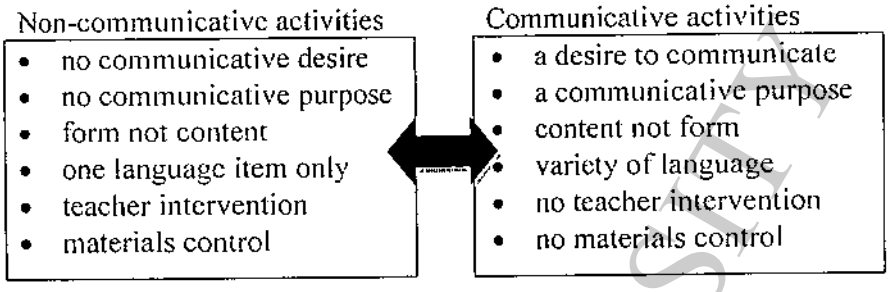


Figure 4 Non-communicative and communicative activities
Source: Hammer, 2007, p. 70

The theory of communication is Halliday's functional account of language use. He described the seven basic functions that language performs for children learning their L1. Additionally, learning L2 was similarly viewed as performing different kinds of functions.
These are:

1. Instrumental function ("I want"): used for satisfying material needs.
2. Regulatory function ("do as I tell you"): used for controlling others behaviors.
3. Interactional function ("me and you"): used for getting along with other people.
4. Personal function ("here I come"): used for identifying and expressing the self.
5. Heuristic function ("tell me why"): used for exploring the world around one's self.
6. Imaginative function ("let's pretend"): used for creating a world of one's own.
7. Informative function ("I've got something to tell you") used for communication of new information (Richards et al, 1992, p. 104).

Different perceptions about communication including grammatical competence, sociolinguistic confidence, discourse confidence and strategic competence are suggested as dimensions of communicative competence (Richards and Rogers 1986, p. 71). "CLT is therefore a unified, yet broadly based theoretical position about the nature of language and of language learning and teaching" (Brown, 1994b, pp. 244-245).

Richards and Rogers argue that at the level of language theory, CLT has a rich, if somewhat eclectic theoretical base. Some of the characteristics of this communicative view of language follow:

1. Language is the usage of the expression of meaning.
2. The principal function of language is for interaction and communication.
3. The structure of language mirrors its functional communicative use.
4. The primary units of language are not purely its grammatical and structural features. But, alignment of functional and communicative meaning as exemplified in discourse (Richards and Rogers, 1986, p. 71)

2.4.1 Total physical response

James Asher developed TPR theory in the 1960's. It is grounded on the theory that memory is enhanced when associated by physical movement. The theory is especially relevant with language acquisition in young learners. Students are asked to perform to such commands as "Pick it up" and "Put it down". The theory is primarily based on listening skills and is linked to physical actions designed to reinforce comprehension of basic items. Carrying out simple instructions in a supportive an innovative classroom can be motivating and fun, but simple instructions are quickly assimilated and with constant repetition become boring to the young learners with a limited attention span.

There are some inherent weaknesses in the approach:

- It is difficult for even highly skilled and inventive teachers to sustain a lesson involving commands and repetitions for more than a few minutes before such activities become the activity becomes repetitions and mundane to participants, although situational role play provides a wide range of contexts for practicing lexis.
- It is difficult to offer instructions without using imperatives; therefore language is restricted in form.
- It is difficult that this type of learning style could extend beyond the beginner level.
- The relevance of some language used in TPR holds little relevance to real world scenarios.
- Moving from listening and responding stage to oral production is workable in small groups, but can prove problematic when applied to classes with over 25 participants.

In defense of the approach, however, it was never intended by its earliest supporters to extend beyond beginner levels. Commands could be made more lexically complex (for example, " Pick up the pencil and place it into the pencil sharpener"), but this exceeds beginner level instruction. Also, courses are not designed to follow a TPR syllabus exclusively. Asher, himself, suggests that TPR enhances already existing techniques and should be used with multiple learning

methods. In regards to the theoretical basis of such an approach, the idea of listening preceding production and for students to be asked to speak only when they are ready to do so, mirrors elements of Krashen's Natural approach. TPR, if used in exclusion of other relevant techniques would probably be unsustainable.

2.4.2 TBM

'Brain based learning' or 'teaching with the brain in mind' has been wildly embraced by many administrators and others in the education industry. An article *"Resisting Education's Fads"* (Christian Science Monitor, August 25, 1998) heavily focused on brain based learning as one of those fads, adding, "Brain research is fueling a new generation of textbooks, curriculum kits, and visiting consultants. It's one of the most popular areas for in-service teacher training, experts say."

Author, Eric Jensen has positioned himself and his book in the right place at the right time. It certainly helps that many of Jensen's ideas and suggestions have immediate appeal, and many have common sense rightness to them. His style in encouraging fresh thinking about approaches to teaching cannot help but motivate teachers.

As a source of ideas and inspiration, Jensen covers a wide area to glean interesting and thought-provoking observations about the brain and learning. He weaves a compelling story using these markers, tying them together into a dramatic whole.

Every topic Jensen covers -- readiness, environments, enrichment, attention, stress, motivation, and so on -- he accents with many interesting references that can't help but trigger the reader's own reflection and creativity. But one should not draw hard and fast conclusions for what is "best" in a classroom situation from his book.

- Education and the Brain: A Bridge Too Far by Dr. John T. Bruer, James S. McDonnell Foundation. Excerpt:

"Brain science fascinates teachers and educators, just like it fascinates all of us. When I speak to teachers there is always a question or two about the educational promise of brain-based curricula. I answer that these ideas have been around for a decade, are often based on misconceptions and overgeneralizations of what we know about the brain, and have little to offer to educators. Educational applications of brain science may come eventually, but as of now neuroscience has little to offer teachers in terms of informing classroom practice.

"Neuroscientists often they are puzzled by the neuroscientific results educators choose to cite, by the interpretations educators give those results, and by the conclusions educators draw from them.

"This article examines a set of claims that I will call the neuroscience and education argument. The negative conclusion is that the argument fails. The argument fails because its advocates are trying to build a bridge too far. Currently, we do not know enough about brain development and neural function to link that understanding directly, in any meaningful, defensible way, to instruction and educational practice."

2.4.3 Authentic bridge to acquisition

Drawing on the above-mentioned fundamentals for young second language learners, it becomes evident that learning is facilitated by a variety of factors. These aspects include a lower affective filter, comprehensible input and a higher ability to acquire pronunciation. As a methodological construction, these factors include creating the appropriate learning environment, lowering the stress level of the L2 learner, employing the L2 learner's sensory motor skills and multiple intelligences and creating opportunities to act or play in the language through role-play. Authentic songs in the target language provide for repetition and imitation, which facilitates learning for a child learning an L2. Furthermore, the ALL learner should be going through the ZPD put forth by Vygotsky along with scaffolding from the instructor or another peer through these role-play activities. Comprehensible input can transpire through a range of activities that use authentic materials such as listening to authentic subject matter.

Bridget C. Pinsonneault in her thesis titled, "Authentic Input in Early Second Language Learning" advocates that authentic materials presented within the above-mentioned methodological framework, shall be referred to as 'The Authentic Bridge to Acquisition Method.' This method results in the production of lexical chunks such as vocabulary following secondly by, the acquisition of lexical agreement, first in number and continuing to gender. Therefore, first lexical chunks are acquired and second lexical agreement is acquired both via the authentic material presented in the learning environment.

2.5 Teacher - student responsibility in a CLT classroom

Communicative Language Teaching, a learner centered model of instruction, requires a different classroom setting than traditional classrooms found in Thailand. Both teacher and student engage in activities based on collaborative, rather than individual approaches. Ideally, tasks are portrayed that encourage learners as active participants in the second language acquisition process. CLT methodology focuses on interaction theory. It reworks the fundamental mission of the teacher and uses communication as a means to achieve a goal. CLT instills dynamic features and tends to change and evolve at any given time. Breen and Candlin (1980), describe the function of the teacher in the CLT classroom, noting the following roles: Firstly, to open the communicative process between every one of the participants in the classroom and to include the exchange of ideas between these participants and a range of texts and authentic materials. Secondly, the teacher is obliged to act as an independent component within the learning/ teaching unit. The final role of teacher is

that of the investigator and learner. This distinctive and valuable individual has much to contribute in terms of appropriate knowledge, abilities and observed experience, presenting an opportunity for an exceptional quality of learning and well ordered skills. All these efforts combine to create what CLT methodology refers to as the "learner centered- experience- based view of second language teaching" Richards and Rogers, (1986 p. 69). It is prudent for teachers adopting a communicative approach to produce and employ authentic materials that meet the special needs of their students. Moreover, teachers need to motivate their students, as well as provide them with safe, comfortable classroom surroundings for language learning. Littlewood (1981) states that the roles of teachers in CLT consist of, but are not limited to manager/ coordinator of activities, language instructor, new language specialist when needed as well as participant. Allwright (1984) maintains that teachers can no longer be regarded as simply 'teachers' and learners just 'learners', since both are managers of learning. The traditional image of teacher as indispensable for the CLT now transcends to a place where students feel safe, unthreatened and non-defensive (pp. 95-96).

Lastly, Deckert (2004) in reference to the student centered characteristic of CLT, emphasizes that "CLT approach features low profile teachers roles, frequent pair work or small group problem solving, students responding to authentic samples of English, extended exchanges on higher interests topics and the interaction of the four basic skills"(p.13) He also states that CLT opposes pervasive teacher controlled drills, quizzing on memorized input, and extensive explanations of English forms.

2.5.1 Teacher qualities and young learners

Research concludes that teachers who maintain an optimistic, professional stance can make significant differences in the students' learning (Darling et. al, 2002). Whatever roles they assume and whatever subject they teach, Stronge (2003) acknowledges, "teachers have a powerful, long-lasting influence on their students. They directly affect how students learn, what they learn, how much they learn, and ways they interact with one another in the world around them". Within this context, the attributes of teachers related to their professional profile (curricula, instructional activities, authentic language use and materials, student interaction and classroom management techniques) as well as their personal traits (warmth, friendliness, helpfulness) or not, carry a certain weight which affects the situation, thus affecting cognitive learning capabilities. Penner (1992) further claims that a teacher who teaches effectively not only teaches the subject, but his personality is part of the task and it affects every learning situation (p. 45). The School Standards Ministry of England (see BBC Homepage 2000) initiated a study lasting approximately 10 months, including 1200 students and 172 teachers. The most striking teacher characteristics were found to be kindness, generosity, listening to students, encouraging them, having faith in them, enjoying teaching and enjoying the subjects, taking time to explain things, offering feedback, sharing opinions, telling the truth and being able to forgive. The British Ministry concluded that teachers having a positive attitude towards students and who inspired through enthusiastic approaches were most preferred. They concluded that teachers should not only have a sound knowledge of

their subject matter, but must also have a sense of their own personal qualities, as these qualities have a direct affect on both teaching and learning atmospheres. On the other hand, children bring language learning their unique curiosity and eagerness to make sense of the world around them. They possess an ability to tackle the most demanding tasks with enthusiasm and willingness. Those who teach young learners need to examine their classroom activities from a child's perspective in order to assess whether their pupils will understand what is asked of them and that they are able to make sense of this new language (Cameron, 2001).

From the first minute they enter a classroom, teachers of young learners are required to have special skills by being alert and well equipped in employing methods and techniques as well as choosing activities according to the cognitive and social development of their students. They must refrain from fear of failure. In support of this premise, Cakir (2004) states, "it needs to be addressed that teaching young learners brings a lot of responsibilities on the shoulders of the teachers in the classroom from designing the materials to implementing them appropriately."

2.6 Learner strategies

Using a variety of teaching approaches to deliver thoughts and ideas that are comprehensible to the young learner is a primary affirmation of communicative and active learning styles. Visuals, gestures, real and authentic materials provide clues at a level young learners can grasp. Concrete objects, body movements and pictures engage students and motivates them to make connections that aid in remembering the language they are hearing. Some kinesthetic approaches include manipulatives, posters, pictures, gestures, voice variety, illustrated books, and drawings on whiteboard, pantomime, puppets and songs.

Authors Judith O'Loughlin, Chair of the Awards Standing Committee and VP of New Jersey TESOL and Judie Haynes, teacher and author of numerous ESL classroom books offer a suggestion list to their ESL staff.

- Include all ESL students in all classroom activities. Peers can assist and new or gradual students will feel more comfortable and less isolated.
- ESL students should actively participate in class activities. Pointing, nodding, drawing and using gestural responses show a level of comprehension. Encourage simple responses.
- Adjust your speaking to the appropriate age. Avoid idioms and slang and repeat phrases when communicating with your body. Make 'individualizing', 'adapting' and 'modifying' credos in creative lesson planning to suit learner needs.
- Cooperative learning activities allow young learners to interact with their peers. Have them draw as a group, or sort numbers and letters together.
- Provide for a "hands on" learning experience. Allow students to manipulate materials and include as many TPR (Total Physical Response) tasks as possible such as drawing pictures, story sequences and writing out simple math problems.

- Build on prior ESL knowledge. Help to make connections between their culture and the culture where learning is taking place.
- Model everything.
- Physically demonstrate, step by step, what is expected.
- Make use of all of the human senses. Allow for touch, listening to sounds, smell and even taste when possible. Talk about words that describe the senses.
- Utilize available authentic technologies. CD ROMs and internet resources provide content. Watch a movie clip on a computer screen. Use books for visual connections and make collages of subjects being taught like clothing, vegetables or professions.
- Adapt material to young learners, but do not simplify the language to extremes. Remember "*i*+1" theory.
- List and review instructions step by step.
- Encourage students to speak, but never force them.
- Increase 'wait times'. An ESL student may know the answer, but may need extra time to process the information.
- Resist the urge to over correct. This may inhibit students and cause them to be less willing to take chances with the language. When mistakes are made, model the proper response.
- Show patience and encouragement. Keep expectations high!
- Use a multi-cultural perspective with students. Point out both differences and similarities.

Teachers need to examine and probe their materials, styles and methods. Reviewing and modifying the syllabus and lesson plans is an efficient initial direction. Teachers must avoid fossilization if they choose to continue with young learners. Innovation, adaption, introduction of new ideas all combine to make repetitive teaching an engaging and active challenge. The manner that teachers model their information should be age specific. Choosing strategies that can be integrated into multiple syllabuses is a primary goal. In closing, it is vital for teachers to impart their successes and failures unto their peers in the field. Optimistically, research should be open, not guarded by myriad journals that require paid access and authors ought to look at their motivations. Are they seeking fame and notoriety at the cost of being disciples of inspiring works? Keep in mind that, "training produces improvement in performance, which can be considerable, long-lasting and pervasive" (Meadows, 1998 in Gross, 1996, p. 641)

2.7 Learning styles

Judy Haynes (2001) published a list of learning styles that the academy has adopted as a component of their NP program. For scholastic inspection reasons, all NP teachers are required to have a poster with photos of their students engaging in these aspects of learning available at all times for visitors to the school. Her article offers

Auditory learners: These students are able to recall what they hear and prefer oral instructions. They learn by listening and speaking. These students enjoy talking and interviewing. They are phonetic readers who enjoy oral reading, choral reading and listening to recorded books. They learn by doing the following:

- Interviewing and debating
- Presenting oral reports
- Participating on a panel
- Participation in oral discussions of written material

Visual learners: These students have ability to recall what they see and prefer written instructions. They are sight-readers who like to read quietly. Presentations through action or video are desirable tools. They learn by observation through such means as:

- Computer graphics, maps, charts
- Cartoons, posters and diagrams
- Graphic organizers
- Texts with pictures

Tactile learners: This style utilizes the sense of touch. These learners understand directions that they write and learn best through manipulatives. The Language Experience Approach (LEA) is effective when teaching children how to read. These students also benefit from whole language approaches to reading. They enjoy:

- Drawing
- Playing board games
- Making models
- Following instructions to make something

Kinesthetic learners: These pupils also learn by touching or manipulating objects. They need to involve their whole body in learning. Total Physical Response is an influential ESL method for these learners. They remember best when they are able to act out a situation by:

- Playing games that involve their whole body
- Movement activities
- Making models
- Following instructions to make something
- Setting up experiments

Global learners: Global learners are spontaneous and intuitive. They do not do well when they are bored. Information needs to be presented in an interesting manner using attractive materials. Cooperative learning strategies and holistic reading methods work well with these learners. Global learners learn best through:

- Choral reading
- Recorded books
- Story writing
- Computer programs
- Games
- Group activities

Analytic Learners: Analytic learners plan and organize their work. They focus on details and are logical. They are phonetic readers and prefer to work individually on activity sheets. They learn best when:

- Information is presented in sequential steps
- Lessons are structured and teacher- directed
- Goals are clear
- Requirements are spelled out

Essential learning strategy for any preschool program for young learners is effective instruction in language development. Children need explicit instruction in English vocabulary, as well as opportunities to hear and speak the language throughout the day. Examples of strategies are listed below.

- Provide explicit, systematic instruction in vocabulary.
- Ensure that students have ample opportunities to talk with both adults and peers and provide ongoing feedback and encouragement.
- Expose young children to rich language input.
- Structure the classroom space and routine to provide scaffolding for young learner language acquisition.
- Encourage continued L1 language development.

2.8 Curriculum development

Curriculum development is a collection of, "practical activities which aim to improve the quality of teaching through the use of systematic planning, development and review practices in all aspects of a language program" (Richards, 2001). Stakeholders such as teachers, learners, parents and administrators make curriculum development a complex and challenging task. Learner factors and additional obstacles related to programs and curricula alone need to taken into consideration prior to implementation. At this point, situational analysis, which is described as "an analysis of factors in the context of a planned or present curriculum that is made in order to assess the potential impact on the project" (Richards, 2001, p. 91) is required. The purpose of this study is to explain how to conduct needs and situational analysis

for designing an ESL curriculum. The main research question is "How does one conduct a needs and situational analysis in order to design an appropriate and efficient ESL curriculum?" Such experimentation has never been performed in the specific target setting for this study. However, there is a request from administrative authorities to initiate such a study in the near future according to the Director of the NP program at the target study location.

Conclusion

The field of early childhood education has made great strides in identifying the building blocks of later school success. The Native Speaker Program uses these building blocks as the foundation for its philosophy, the objectives for children's learning, and guidelines for teaching and working with families. The revised Native Speaker program helps teachers interact with young children in ways that promote development and learning, foster children's social competence, support children's learning through play, create rich environments for learning, and forge strong stakeholder relations. By meaningfully translating research into practice, The Native Speaker Program provides educators the tools they need to actively engage all the children in their classrooms on a path to succeed in school and in life.